

United States Mint, Philadelphia, Penn.,

MELTER AND REFINER'S DEPARTMENT,

8th May, 1879.

Sir,

In reply to your letter of the 7th Inst., received this morning, asking my views on permitting persons to study the operations of Melting & Refining in the Mint in detail, in order to be able to fill like positions elsewhere, I respectfully recall the period of 1852-4, after the fuller development of the California Mines, when increased skill & knowledge of melting & assaying were demanded, and this Mint was regarded as the chief source, — several persons were allowed, under authority from the then Director, and with my full sanction, to observe the operations of melting and refining in the fullest detail, but the impression is strong on memory that it was allowed chiefly, if not wholly, with a view to some Western position as Melters. I recollect preparing a number of persons expressly for the Branch Mint at San Francisco & the Assay Office at New York, at the period named, & other places were
Hon. A. Loudon Snowden named

- named at the same time.

When the great lodes of Nevada, and again the mines of Colorado, were opened, there was a sudden expansion of the demand for melting & assaying skill, and several persons were allowed to study melting & Refining in the Mint, but the impression is dominant in my mind, when I reflect on that period, that they had an appointment in prospect at least as the ground of their request & of the permission granted them.

Coming to more recent times, the late Dr Linderman told me personally that he was desirous that a friend of his, Mrⁿ Herring, should acquire knowledge & skill in my Department, with a view to his probably filling some like official position in the West. I accordingly nominated him as a workman. He was appointed by the late Superintendent, confirmed by Dr Linderman, assigned as a workman to the Deposit melting room, where he has ever since continued with credit to himself, and advantage to the Government. In like manner throughout, Mrⁿ Brewster
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- was appointed, assigned to the same position, & worked faithfully until, at the Assayer's request, he was transferred to the Department of the latter, where he still continues, acquiring the coveted knowledge, & yet faithful to the Government.

I regret my lack of memory of minuter details, and of the names of persons, who had these schooling appointments during the last 25 years, but there was nothing peculiar in the appointments, or thought to be illegal, or memory would certainly recall them minutely. The pervading idea seems to have been that they were due to a promise or expectation of, or to an intended or actual appointment, to a government position, or due to the workman's position which was accepted.

In reference to Dr A. Mucklé, the chief subject of your letter, I may state that he told me he wished to perfect himself in Melting, Refining & Assaying, with a view to filling such a position in future, designating no place, and asked me if I would object to it. I told him that I could not speak for the Assayer, but I would personally be glad to serve him, as an old friend, & be glad to exhibit
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- exhibit all my operations in detail, but that permission must be obtained from a higher authority. To the query whether such appointments had been made, I replied that they had, but my answer was colored or influenced by his statement that he wished to prepare himself for such a position, the inference in my mind being that some certain position had been hinted to him or possibly promised him. Since such promises of public positions are generally regarded as rigidly private, I forbore to question Dr Muckle more closely. It was this idea, which I inferred, but which Dr M. did not assert, that pervaded my intercourse ~~that~~ with him & with Mr Childs, whom I saw at Dr M's request.

I shall regret it much, if my misinterpretation of Dr M's plans should be the cause of disappointing him in his expectation of acquiring more minute knowledge of the Mint processes, because I would be glad to serve him personally as well as to gratify Mr Childs, whom we all esteem so highly

I am

Hon. A. Loudon Snowden
Superintendent

Very Respectfully yours
J. C. Booth M & A